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Twelfth Meeting of the Africa Regional
Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration
of Women in Development

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
23 to 25 April 1991

# Report to the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of women in development (ARCC) on the Meetings of:

- the 35th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
Vienna, 27 February - 8 March 1991;

- 11th session of the Board of Trustees of the Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
and the United Nations Development Fund for Women
New York, 19 - 22 February 1991

E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.XII/91/4

## A. REPORT ON THE 35TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

### INTRODUCTION

The Commission on the Status of Women began its Thirty-Fifth Session on 27 February 1991 at Vienna. The Session was opened by the Under-Secretary General, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna. The meeting was attended by 45 member States of the Commission on the Status of Women, 33 States members of the United Nations participating as observers, three non-member states represented by observers, 6 specialized UN agencies, 4 intergovernmental organizations, one liberation movement and 35 non-governmental organizations.

Opening the session, Margaret J. Anstee, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV) said that international events, with their emphasis on war and conflict, formed a backdrop to the Commission deliberations. It had fallen on women throughout history, to clean up after wars, restoring social cohesion and harmony and tending wounds, physical and psychological. Working towards the triple objectives of equality, development and peace, the Commission sought to remove the cause of future conflicts and to construct the kind of societies in which war and want could not flourish. In characterizing the three priority themes (equality, development and peace) to be discussed by the Commission, she evoked two different ideas - unity in diversity and the importance of international co-operation. Under the theme peace and in dealing with the specific problems of such women as refugees, migrants, young, old, disabled or head of households, she said that the extreme diversity of women should be recognized. Continuing, she said that the solution of many of the problems of specific groups of women rested with the solution of the problems for all women. In that sense, there was unity in diversity.

Speaking on the priority theme of development, Miss Anstee said that if women were to advance, there had to be national institutions for the advancement of women. Women's concerns should be integrated into all development activities, and not be seen as separate. This, she said, required an effective national machinery to watch out for women's concerns and effective programmes for women.

In conclusion, she said that in order to have effective national action, effective international machinery was also needed, of which the Commission was a central part. This year would be a decisive one for the future of the international machinery, since the next programme budget would be considered and approved in the General Assembly. In this regard, she asked the Commission to define what needs should be met by the programme, by assigning priorities within the programme and by providing guidance on the factors that should be taken into account by the Secretary-General in undertaking his review of the resources needed and available.

Following the opening statement by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, the Commission elected, by acclamation, Mrs. Nina Klimovna Kovalskaya (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Chairperson for the thirty-fifth session of the Commission. Mrs Nina Kovalskaya was elected in view of the accession of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany with effect from 3 October 1990, the Commission, in accordance with rule 19 of the rules of procedure of the functional Commissions, proceeded to the election of a Chairperson to replace Mrs. Helga E. Hoerz (German Democratic Republic) who had been elected at the thirty-fourth session.

The Commission also elected by acclamation Mrs Liliana Bonilla (Colombia) as Vice chairperson to replace Mrs. Esther Lozano de Rey (Colombia) upon her resignation. In accordance with Council resolution 1987/21, the following members of the Bureau elected at the thirty-fourth session of the Commission, will continue to serve on the Bureau: Mrs. Patricia B. Licuanan (Philippines) and Mrs Mervat Tallawy (Egypt) as Vice-Chairprsons; M. Olivier Maitland Palen (France), as Rapporteur.

Adoption of the Agenda: The Commission adopted the following provisional agenda and approved the proposed organization of work for the session including proposals made by the elected Chairperson.

Provisional Agenda

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters
3. Programming and co-ordination matters related to the United Nations and the United Nations system
4. Monitoring the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.
5. Priority themes:
   (a) Equality: Vulnerable women, including migrant women;
   (b) Development: National, regional and international machinery for the effective integration of women in the development process, including non-governmental organizations;
   (c) Peace: Refugee and displaced women and children.
6. Provisional agenda for the thirty-sixth session of the Commission.
7. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its thirty fifth session.

Following the adoption of the agenda, the chairperson made a statement in which she said that the main task facing the Commission at the current session, was to find an answer to what could be done nationally and internationally to involve more women in the process of development. For that purpose, representatives of Governments, international bodies and non-governmental organizations should unite their efforts. To obtain the answer, the Commission would consider questions for the preparation and convening of the world conference on women in 1995, the interregional consultation on women in public life, the role of national machinery in the integration of women in the development process and other issues.

**Programming and co-ordination matters related to the United nations System (3)**

In presenting agenda item 3, the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women recalled the role and the activities of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. She said that the programme for the advancement of women had been accorded no special priority in the medium-term plan. She also provided a statistical update on the situation of women in the Secretariat. She informed the meeting that as of 31 December 1990, the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution was 28.7 percent; and the number of women Under-

Secretary-Generals was two. However, she said that the newly appointed official for United Nations High Commission for Refugees was a woman. There was still no Woman Assistant Secretary-General but the number at the D-2 level was 10 or 11.8 per cent of staff at this level. The number of women at the D-1 level was 14, or 6 per cent. She further said that General Assembly resolution 45/239, adopted on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee on 21 December 1990, not only called for the attainment of 35 per cent women in posts subject to geographical distribution overall by 1995, but requested that to the extent possible and all things being equal, women should comprise 25 per cent of all posts at levels D-1 and above by 1995. The attainment of the 25 per cent goal means that at least two out of three posts at levels D-1 and above should go to women. Following her presentation and with reference to the Programme of work for the biennium 1992-1993, several representatives noted that the programme continued to provide for meetings of experts in the context of preparations for priority themes identified by the Commission. On the other hand, numerous representatives welcomed the emphasis placed on assistance to Governments with a view to reinforcing national machinery.

With regard to the status of women in the Secretariat, respresentatives expressed disappointment that the number of women holding posts subject to geographical distribution had not reached the target of 30 percent laid down for 1990. On the part of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Commission on the Status of Women was informed that in compliance with the General Assembly resolution to increase the representation of women in the secretariat to a target of 30% ECA established a 'Task Force on Women in ECA' (TAFWE) in 1989 and has since been working to achieve the goals particularly raising the representation of women at ECA. There has been some progress. As of early this year (1991) ECA has a total of 34 professional women out of 211 staff members which represents 16.3% of ECA staff compared to 11.5% of ECA staff as of last year.

Several representatives stressed the need and the urgency for recruiting qualified women to fill senior Secretariat Posts and recalled that the United Nations should be a model institution as regards equality between men and women. As a whole, representatives expressed satisfaction at the conduct of an exhaustive survey and an overall analysis of the principal obstacles in the way of improving the status of women in the secretariat. A draft resolution calling for an increase in

the number of women in senior policy-level and decision-making posts at the United Nations to achieve a participation rate of 35% by 1995 was introduced and debated on. It was also noted that what was needed was an equitable balance between women and men staff members at managerial levels in all substantive areas as well as in field posts. Concerning the implementation of the system wide medium term plan for women and development, a good number of representatives noted the significance of the system-wide medium term plan in connection with the implementation of the strategies. They observed that the plan represented a coherent and effective approach to planning and programming for the United Nations system as a whole.

**Monitoring the Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (4)**

The Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women introduced the agenda item 4. In her introductory remarks, she said that the first matter to be taken up dealt with the proposals for the preparation and convening of the world conference on women in 1995. Concerning the venue of the conference, she said that invitations had been received from the Governments of Austria and China. Two reports were also introduced, one concerned the development of statistics for monitoring the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies, while the second was the report of the Secretary-General on action to increase awareness of the slow progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

Prepared by the Statistical office of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA) and extracted from a forthcoming publication entitled The World's Women 1970-1990, the data as represented and interpreted could be used by policy makers, women's advocates and the media to advance the status of women. From the data, the Commission was informed that it was clear that the majority of women still lagged behind men in terms of power, wealth and opportunity, although there had been some improvement over the past 20 years. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on action to increase awareness of the slow progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies, it was reported that the Department of Public Information (DPI) had been requested to carry out a world-wide educational campaign to increase awareness of the obstacles encountered, particularly with regard to de facto equality in political participation and decision making; to the Advancement of Women in education, employment and health, especially in developing countries; and to the participation of women in the peace process.

In the debate that followed, numerous representatives, UN agencies and NGO's spoke on their programme of activities relative to the implementation of the Strategies. China, noting that the previous three World conferences had been held in Latin America, Europe and Africa, said that Asia should be the next venue. Several member States particularly the Africa group and the group of 77 supported and welcomed China's offer to host the World Conference. As a whole, with regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies along with the impact experienced by the women, most representatives expressed the need for public information. The dominant idea was that the success of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies required the public to become aware of the priorities which guided the advancement of women and the obstacles which it was encountering. Extensive information campaign through the use of the media expert meetings and other means was expressed.

Other issues dominating the debate included support for the cause of women and children living under apartheid, situation of Palestinian Women and women refugees. In this regard, representatives called for more efforts and support by the international community and the United Nations bodies to these groups of women and children who are living under difficult conditions.

Debating on the International Year of the Family (1994) and on the basis of the information transmitted by the Commission for Social Development, many representatives stressed that the policies and programmes adopted for the Year should contribute to the achievement of equality between men and women in accordance with the principles affirmed in the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. In this connection, the Commission on the Status of Women and each of its members at the national level had an important role to play. It is also as was noted important that national machinery for the Advancement of Women should be associated with the preparation of policies and programmes adopted for the International Year. However, it was noted by several representatives that action in favour of the family should not result into making the situation of female heads of households more difficult.

In general, the Commission observed that though there has been some progress in the implementation of the strategies and whereby in some areas women's conditions have improved,

however, as a whole women still lag behind in education, they continue to work harder and under poor working conditions and in most cases have been affected by the economic crisis.

Priority Themes: Equality, Development and Peace (5)

The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda with reference to three working documents: report of the Secretary-General on Vulnerable women, including migrant; report of the Secretary-General on national, regional and international machinery for the effective integration of women in the development process, including non-governmental organizations; and report of the Secretary-General on refugee and displaced women and children. In introducing the agenda item, the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women emphasized the vulnerability of certain groups of women such as young women, female heads of households and migrant women. She also pointed out the importance of national, regional and international machinery for integrating women in the development process.

In discussing equality; vulnerable women, including migrant women, many representatives stated that measures for the benefit of vulnerable groups of women, should aim at improving their living conditions with the purpose of their full integration in society. They emphasized in this connection, the necessity for political will at the highest level in order to establish social policies directed towards the advancement of vulnerable women. That governments should provide juridical and physical protection as well as setting up specific measures and support services in order to promote the independence and self-sufficiency of these groups of women. The Commission also observed that the number of female heads of households had increased. In this regard it was stressed that the situation of female heads of households could be improved by social policies in the field of family allowances and day-care centres, training and vocational reintegration measures. The legal recognition of women as heads of households was also of paramount importance.

Discussing on migrant women, many representatives expressed the need to provide information on their rights and obligations, to improve their living conditions with literacy campaign and vocational training. On disabled and elderly women, several representatives noted the important contributions made by the disabled women to the society and that there was need to promote a positive image in order to eliminate prejudice against vulnerable women.

Under the theme development; many representatives reaffirmed the basic role of both national and international machinery for the advancement of women in the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies. That regional and international machinery played and should continue to play a role in backing up national efforts, more especially in the exchange of information, the training of personnel and financial assistance enabling the national machinery to carry out projects and programmes. The commission's attention was drawn to the fact that a number of machineries had been thoroughly restructured over the last few years and has seen an improvement in their status, increased development of their technical potential or the creation of new organizations that could supplement and strengthen them. Some representatives pointed out the successes of their machinery especially those who have had received the political support at all levels to enable them carry out specific activities, and also because of the importance accorded to the equality of management.

The difficult situation experienced and affecting the machinery was also pointed out. The problems encountered are mainly associated with lack of human and financial resources, the various manifestations of certain cultural phenomena, such as patriarchy, certain traditional practices and the like often made it very difficult for the machinery to function. The resources of the national machineries were inadequate for meeting requirements and hence international aid was frequently becoming indispensable. In this connection, many representatives stressed the usefulness of the assistance provided by the United Nations system especially in the collection and dissemination of information; additional effort was required to develop networks linking the national machinery and the machinery of the United Nations system.

In discussing the theme 'peace': refugee and displaced women and children the commission considered various difficulties and problems experienced by refugees which included among others separation from their parents and relatives, psychological problems linked to the fact of being cut off from their home countries, financial and social services which are often inadequate in the country of asylum. Despite such difficulties refugee or displaced women who often become heads of households, had to continue to ensure that their families survived, maintain the family's cohesion and conserve its values. Some representatives stressed that refugee women were also affected by the limitations on women's rights in the host society and were often the last to find a job and be reintegrated. In addition, violence in all its forms was a constant threat in the camps.

To decrease the flow of refugees, many representatives emphasized the need for long term solutions which dealt with the root of the refugee problem. In this regard, representatives appealed to the international community to bring about lasting peace and to prevent regional conflicts, or to resolve them promptly when they accurred. From a long-term viewpoint, development was considered a precondition for a solution of the refugee problem and the need was stressed to adopt measures to promote the integration of refugees and displaced persons, particularly women and children, in development. Many representatives in this connection declared their support for the activities of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in particular, and added that the Commission on the Status of Women had an important role to play in terms of encouragement and following-up. Increased participation by women in the definition and implementation of refugee policies at all levels was another preconditions for the adoption of policies better suited to their needs; a broad consensus emerged on that subject.

Continuing the debate, many representatives considered that an important part of activities for the benefit of refugee women was legal in nature, and they made reference to the international legal instruments existing in that field and that women should be directly informed of their rights. Finally, many representatives of countries receiving refugees, of specialized agencies belonging to the United Nations system and of non-governmental organizations reported on programmes for refugee and displaced women and children. Against the background of a recent aggravation of the refugee problem in certain countries, national machineries for refugees had been established.

Provisional Agenda for the Thirty-Sixth Session of the Commission (6)

Under this item, the Commission was brought to the attention of a note by the Secretariat which described the steps proposed to be taken to prepare the priority themes to be considered by the Commission at its thirty-sith session in 1992. Under the priority theme for equality: elimination of *d*e jure and *de facto* discrimination against women, it is proposed that the Commission will focus on the analysis in 1992 on the mechanisms used to remove, most effectively,in implementing *de jure* elimination of discrimination. The analysis should also include the examination of monitoring mechanisms with particular attention to institutions such as the equal opportunity commission and others.

In the area of development, the priority theme will be prepared in two parts: (a) Integration of women in the process of development taking into consideration integration of specific groups and women in development (WID) approaches. (b) Women and the environment. The effects that environmental degradation has on women's role and status, particularly in developing countries need to be identified. The report 'Women and the environment' will form the basis of the Commissions's contribution to the World Conference.

Equal participation in all efforts to promote international co-operation, peace and disarmament will be the third issue to be considered and debated on by the Commission at its thirty-sixth session. A report on which will be based on the results of the Interregional Consultation on Women in Public life in September 1991 will focus on the impact of women politicians, parliamentarians and grass-root activists on decisions and political processes.

**Adoption of the report of the Commission on its thirty-fifth session (7)**

At the end of its session, the Commission adopted 15 Resolutions some of these resolutions are included in this report as annexes. No final decision was made on the venue for the World Conference though the group of 77 expressed their decisions for China.

**Discussions and Conclusions**

Having discussed issues raised and debated on by representatives and observers to the thirty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the following points need to be stressed.

Concerning the status of women in the Secretariat, though there has been some progress in the recruitment of qualified females among UN agencies, more effort is required to reach the present 35% target by 1995. On the other hand, there is also need to look at the female employment situation among member States. In general, it has been observed world-wide that women still lag behind and the majority are at the very low paying positions. Looking at this situation, there is need also at the national level to carry out a survey on female employment situation both within the government and private insitutions. This is necessary if national machineries and others involved in the advancement of women are to achieve the goals of equality as well as assessing the extent to which the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies has an impact on women.

With regard to the venue of the World Conference in 1995 which received a lot of debate both in the plenary and closed sessions, the following decision was made.

**Decision by the Chairperson of the Commission on the Question of the Venue of the World Conference on Women in 1995.**

1. The Commission on the Status of Women considered the question of the venue of the World Conference in 1995.

2. General Assembly resolution 45/129 took note of the invitation extended by the Government of Austria to host the World Conference in 1995. The same resolution requested the Commission to decide on the venue of the Conference not later than 1992, taking into account that preference should be given to those regions which have not yet hosted a world conference on women. To date, world conferences on women have been held in the regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Africa.

3. The Commission took note of the offer made by the People's Republic of China to host the World Conference in 1995, including a forum for non-governmental organizations.

4. All members of the Group of 77 expressed their support for China's invitation to host the Conference.

5. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/129, the Commission agreed to make known its decision during the thirty-sixth session of the Commission.

On monitoring the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies, national, regional and international machineries need to put more efforts in the implementation and particulalry the manner in which the Strategies are being translated into action, and how operational activities and projects are being handled to benefit the target groups. National machineries have a big role to play in the review, appraisal and monitoring the implementation of the Strategies particularly in preparation for the World Conference whose review of the Strategies will be concerned with the practical and concrete actions taken at the national, subregional and regional levels.

With regard to issues on priority themes - equality, development and peace, concern was expressed particularly on the cause of vulnerable women including migrant women and other specific groups. It was felt that, such groups needed attention and that every efforts should be provided to give the support they deserve in all aspects - financial resources, human development, information and income generating activities. Emphasis on national, regional and international machinery for the effective integration of women in the development process, including non-governmental organizations was stressed. The co-ordination of women activities and dissemination of information among these machineries or institutions was considered important.

**Ad hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women**

The fifteenth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on women was held in Vienna for two days 11-12 March 1991. The meeting adopted the following proposed agenda including amendments:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. (a) Preparation of report on the priority themes for the thirty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 1992:
   - (i) Equality: elimination of *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination against women;
   - (ii) Development: Integration of women in the process of development (including women and the environment);
   - (iii) Peace: Equal participation in all efforts to promote international cooperation, peace and disarmament.

   (b) Preparation of report on monitoring of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Commission on the Status of Women, 1992.
4. System-wide co-ordination:
   - (a) Preparations of 1994 World Survey on Role of Women in Development;
   - (b) Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life
   - (c) Feasibility of a central roster of consultants for work related to the advancement of women
   - (d) Preparations for world conference on women, 1995.
5. Operational activities

- Report of the Director-General, Development and International Economic Co-operation.
- National machinery.

6. Follow-up to the thirty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

7. (a) Relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1990, and the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fifth session.

   (b) Preparation for General Assembly report on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 1991.

8. Other matters

9. Adoption of the report.

**Agenda item 3: PREPARATION OF REPORTS ON PRIORITY THEMES FOR COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION**

(i) Equality

Based on discussions with regard to priority theme under the rubric of Equality, it was noted that, while analyzing the gap between *de jure* and de facto discrimination of women, emphasis in developing countries should be made on such issues as access to land, water, financial resources (credits/loans), level of participation in agrarian reforms, as well as on issues of inheritance rights and ownership. In general, the difference between assistance and advancement of women should be clearly underlined.

(ii) Development

(a) Integration of Women in Development

The agencies presented information on additional sources for the preparation of the report in the area of mainstreaming. The role of national machinery was discussed and clarified as that they should serve as catalysts to obtain effective mainstreaming and implementation from other government agencies. It was considered that the context in which national machinery operated was also important and national machinery and mainstreaming should move from assistance to change the advancement of women's status. Finally, it was felt by several agencies that rather than focussing on special age groups a comprehensive life course approach would be useful.

(b) Women and the environment

Based on the discussion, additional areas were identified for inclusion in the report as the action by transnational companies, refugee women, housing, use of the environment, women in subsistence economies, and women in situations of forced migration. It was strongly felt that the issue of women and the environment should be raised to the political level.

**Agenda item 3 (iii) 'Priority Theme Peace' and 4(b) 'Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life'**

The meeting discussed the Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life and the expert group meeting to be held in May. The latter meeting would focus on the obstacles and factors that motivated women to participate in public life and would be attended by experts on women's issues. It was felt that an important issue to include in the agenda would be that of the role of women in post-war reconstruction of their countries. The meeting would also identify the issues that would constitute the substantive basis for discussion at the Consultation. The Consultation would be the only intergovernmental meeting on the subject and would be attended by female politicians and would constitute a platform for statements, discussions and hearings which should lead to the elaboration of a political agenda for women for the coming decade.

Agenda item 4

The meeting discussed the preparation of 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development and inputs and contributions made by the UN agencies. Issues to be included in the survey were discussed. It was decided that further input is required and that following the schedule for the preparation of the survey, any inputs should be submitted on time. The meeting also decided that following the recommendation by the thirty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women that more women be nominated and recruited to UN posts, particularly those at the decision-making level, the meeting recommended that those conditions be extended to the recruitment of experts and consultants.

Agenda item 5:

After a lengthy debate on the DIEC Director General's report including the objective and purpose of the report, its use and the contribution made by various UN agencies to the report, the Inter-Agency meeting recommended that the issue of women in development be mainstreamed into all chapters of the report of the Director-General, Development and International Economic and Cooperation on 'Operational Activities' ensuring adequate representation of the subject. There

should also be a separate part of the report containing analytical material on operational activities concerned with women in development within the UN system. The introduction to that report should clarify the intent of the mainstreaming proposal. The meeting also considered the importance of strengthening national machineries for effective implementation of the Nairobi Strategies as well as the advancement of women in development.

Agenda item 6

The Division for the Advancement of Women informed the meeting of the various inter-agency meetings and consultations scheduled for the year as follow-up actions to the thirty-fifth session of the Commission. This include inputs from UN agencies and regional Commissions particularly with reference to a number ot reports to be prepared by the Division. In this regard, deadlines have been set for the submission of the required reports to the Division in Vienna.

Agenda item 7 relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fifth session were brought to the attention of the meeting.

Agenda item 8

Under other matters, the timing of the next meeting was discussed. It was decided by consensus that it would be advantageous to hold the sixteenth Inter-Agency Meeting on Women before the Commission session. Hence, the Sixteenth Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women will be held two days before the Commission tentatively 9 - 10 March 1992.

Adoption of the Report (9)

At the end of its session, the inter-agency meeting agreed that the final report would be sent by fax to each participants for comments before its finalization. In this regard, no report was adopted.

## B. REPORT ON THE 11th SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (INSTRAW)

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Eleventh session of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was held in New York from 19 to 22 February 1991. The Institute whose Headquarters is in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, usually held its Board Meeting there. As the new Director is yet to be appointed INSTRAW, met this time in New York and was represented by the Deputy Director assisted by the staff of INSTRAW.

Members of the Board are appointed on their individual capacity. Africa had three members on the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW G. Mongela (Tanzania), Hawa Diallo (Mali) and Victoria Okobi (Nigeria) - (absent). The Eleventh session of the Board of Trustees was opened by the Vice-President of the Board, Ms G. A. Mahbud (Bangladesh) who was elected president of the present session, with Venezuela as Vice President and New Zealand as Rapporteur. The Secretary General was represented by an ASG. The representation of the Dominican Republic and the Regional Commissions (of whom ESCAP, ECA and ECE were present) are ex-officio members of the Board.

The principal agenda items to be considered by the Board were:

(a) The implementation of the Work Programme for 1990 - progress report on the Institute **(Agenda item 4)**;

(b) The cooperation with Regional Commissions, INSTRAW focal points and correspondents **(Agenda item 5)**;

(c) The development of communication materials on women in development **(Agenda item 7)**;

(d) Other matters related to the functioning of the Institute **(Agenda item 8)**.

**Implementation of the Work Programme 1990 - Progress report on the Institute**

2. This item of the agenda took most sessions of the meeting and was discussed in detail by Board members. The Deputy Director spoke at length on the activities of INSTRAW in 1990. In highlighting the activities of INSTRAW last year she devided her presentation into five sections: **(a)** Participation of the Institute at meetings of the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations organs; **(b)** Research and training presented following the sequence of the approved programme budget for 1990 - 1991; **(c)** Information, documentation and communication; **(d)** Programmes approved by the board with secured funding; and **(e)** Administrative and financial matters which summarize some outstanding management issues.

The research and training activities of INSTRAW included such as statistics and indicators on women, including women's work in the informal sector, women and water supply and sanitation, women and new and renewable sources of energy. Monitoring and evaluation methodologies for programmes and projects on women and development; gave a new orientation to its programmes on training packages on women and development studies extending its WID studies curricula programme worldwide; continued the programme on technology in terms of **(a)** the publication of Women's Access to Technology: Myths and Realities, and fields such as women, environment and sustainable development, women and communication for development, as well as country-specific research and training materials on rural women, including rural credit.

For 1990, a total of 11 training workshops were organized by the Institute. Five were within the programme of improving statistics on women, three at the national level and two at the regional level. Within the programme on women and new and renewable sources of energy, three national and two regional workshops were also convened. Furthermore, the Institute in co-operation with the organizations in the United Nations system and other institutions co-organized an inter-regional training seminar to elaborate adequate training material on women and rural credit and actively participated in the inter-regional seminar on "Policy development for increased women's participation in public management."

The Institute was assessed by an evaluation team composed of three individual consultants to evaluate INSTRAW in August-September 1990. The evaluation mission was commissioned by three donor countries, namely Finland, the Netherlands and Norway. At the time of preparing the present report, only an advance draft was received by the Institute, on the understanding that a final version would soon be made availabe.

3. In the debate that followed this introduction, various points were made by the Board members. On the whole the work of INSTRAW on statistics and indicators on women, in collaboration with the United Nations statistical office was unanimously viewed as the most important contribution INSTRAW has made to our knowledge of gender related data. The ECA Representative particularly pointed out the valuable handbook that has been produced in draft form by INSTRAW entitled "Handbook on Methods of compiling and analysing Statistics on Women in the Informal Sector in Industry, Trade and Services."

The training programmes, on improving statistic on women carried out by INSTRAW were appreciated by all concerned. Activities related to statistics undertaken and being undertaken have taken place in Malaysia, Sudan, Puerto Rico, Mali and the South Pacific regions. An interesting parallel programme within the area of statistics is INSTRAW's programme for a methodological study on improving statistics on aging women. With several NGO's attending the Board meeting as observers they supported and collaborated its implementation with INSTRAW.

4. A second activity of INSTRAW which was discussed at the meeting was entitled "Macro-Economic Policy Analysis of Women's participation in the Informal Sector." This activity supplements the above activities of INSTRAW on the Informal Sector. In relation to this project ATRCW has been invited to attend a meeting in March 18 - 22, 1991 in Rome to discuss the **(a)** overview of women's work in the Informal Sector; **(b)** identification of problems and constraints in the Informal Sector that need to be addressed by policy measures; and **(c)** guidelines on policy design for women in the Informal Sector elaborating on four major areas for policy section such as: national development planning for projects and programmes, labour policies, agricultural policies and financial and monetary policies.

The ECA representative introduced a note of caution concerning INSTRAW's activities in the Informal Sector since this activity is similar to the on-going inter-agency project in ECA on the Informal Sector. Furthermore a parallel programme introduced by INSTRAW in which all Regional Commissions are being invited to participate is also being developed, again related to the Informal Sector. It was essential to have conceptional clarity on all these activities.

5. Of interest to ECA/ATRCW is INSTRAW's report on production of training materials on women and credit. Since a similar effort has been made by ATRCW when it produced "Guide for the Promotion and Development of African Women Entrepreneurship and their access to Credit." In fact this information was given to Board members of INSTRAW.

Apparently an inter-regional training seminar was held by INSTRAW in collaboration with IFAD and the Mediterranean Institute of Management from 19 to 30 November 1990 in Cyprus. The idea was to obtain in depth information with "the object of elaborating adequate training materials on women and rural credit." Therefore, INSTRAW proposes in 1991 to produce training materials addressed to bankers and managers in the private Banking System, NGOs and international agencies. This project was received with some reservation since much work has already been done in this field, specially in Asia, as pointed out by some Board members.

**Cooperation with Regional Commission, INSTRAW focal points and correspondents**

6. The second consultative meeting between the Regional Commissions and INSTRAW took place after the tenth session of the Board of Trustees in February 1990. The objective of the meeting was to co-ordinate parallel programming between the Institute and the Regional Commissions.

It was suggested that a conceptual document concerning parallel activities between INSTRAW and the Regional Commissions based on proposals made by the commissions be prepared, to be presented at the Executive Secretaries Meeting

which will be held in March 1991. Furthermore it was agreed that strategies would have to be designed to secure funding for parallel programming and that a minimum period of two years would be needed for their implementation.

All Regional Commissions sent their comments to INSTRAW's proposal - the ECA send a project proposal on the "Informal Sector and Policy Design" based on the Abuja declaration entitled "Participatory Development: The Role of Women in Africa in the 1990s" adopted during the Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development, held in Abuja, Nigeria, 6 - 10 November 1989, was prepared by ECA within the framework of parallel programming between INSTRAW and the regional commissions. The proposal was designed taking into consideration the underlying goals of the declaration, which called for "the contribution of the Informal Sector into the mainstream of the economy." The project is therefore proposed to contribute to the long-term objective of the full integration of African women in Africa's economic development. The activities identified involve the expansion of the current existing UNDP-funded project on the Informal Sector, collection of statistical data materials and conducting training workshops for policy makers and planners and for training of trainers. The project further hopes to ensure that legislative regulations for the Informal Sector as well as related policies and measures are formulated and made known to the agents concerned.

The ECA Representative sought clarification on the concept of parallel programming as opposed to Inter-Agency Cooperation. It appears that parallel programming has a loose association of agencies at conceptual level.

7. Cooperation with focal points established by INSTRAW caused long discussions. As some of the Board members were focal points for INSTRAW in their country very often, these focal points represented INSTRAW at conferences and seminars. They disseminated INSTRAW's publication as well as publicised INSTRAW's work. These focal points were now established in all regions. However, they were hampered by lack of resources, as INSTRAW did not have a special subject for them, and their functions were not exactly clear. During this meeting there were suggestions for having regional focal points to meet together.

The Regional Commissions warned that budgetary constraints may exist to organise such a meeting. The ECA representative suggested that instead of establishing new focal points in the Africa region, WID national machineries could act as focal points. However, some African Board members felt that sometimes government machineries were too bureaucratic and therefore both approaches should be tried.

**Development of Communication Material on Women and Development**

8. INSTRAW in collaboration with the Italian association of women and Development (AIDOS) has a two year project entitled "Development of communication materials on Women and Development." The focus of the project is in Latin America and the Caribbean region. The objective of the project is:

(a) to design a methodological approach based on country profiles to define women's role and involvement in communications, as well as the impact of communications of women;

(b) to design and prepare country projects ... and to elaborate communication support material for each country on the basis of each project design.

While these objectives are of interest to all concerned and is of special interest to ATRCW, as it is embarking on a communication prospect also funded by Italy, the task given to the local consultants for the country profile in the INSTRAW project was too wide in the opinion of some Board members. The consultants were assigned to:

(a) survey and analyse of existing communication, systems in traditional and modern sector;

(b) survey and analysis of rural and urban women's role in communication;

(c) identify and assess training needs in communication;

(d) survey and analyse women as consumers of information/communication;

(e) analyse impact of various communication on women;

(f) analysis of women in communications as agents of change;

(g) use of communications to the benefit and advancement of women.

The project is still in the initial stages and is expected to take off in 1992. However, the need for a focussed approach remains valid in this project.

9. **Other matters related to the functioning of the Institute**

As mentioned above the INSTRAW is presently in transition. The evaluation of INSTRAW conducted by three major donors namely Finland, Netherland and Norway was not distributed to all Board members. The meeting was informed that the evaluation team wanted the Board to be more active in future. Hence the proposal to have a sub-committee composed of Board members to chart, the future of INSTRAW work was proposed by the meeting.

Most Regional Commissions representatives including ECA expressed the view that (a) Since the evaluation report was not distributed to all it was difficult to see why a sub-committee on programming was necessary (b) In any case, programming was a major function of the Director of the Institute, according to the Statute of the Committee - how would this programming by the subcommittee affect the role of the Director when appointed?

The views of the regional commissions, led by ESCAP, was appreciated. The terms of reference of the Sub-Committee were being drafted and discussed when the ECA representative had to leave to come back to ECA. During this final session, ex-officio members expressed the view that in the past there were several closed meeting of the Board where they were excluded. As this tends to "marginalize" the ex-officio members and is contrary to the provision of the INSTRAW statute, the matter needed to be rectified. The President of the Board regretted that such a situation had arisen and promised to rectify the situation.

**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**
**Thirty-fifth session**
**Vienna, 27 February - 8 March 1991**
**Agenda item 5 (b)**

PRIORITY THEMES:

DEVELOPMENT: NATIONAL, REGIONAL ND INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY FOR THE EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, INCLUDING NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Mexico1/ and Zaire:2/ draft resolution
Women and development

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15 of 24 May 1990 and Commission resolutions 34/3 of 8 March 1990 and 34/5 of 9 March 1990,

Convinced that the effective mobilization of women is an essential element to achieving the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (E.85.IV.10, chap. I, sect. A) and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, annexed to General Assembly resolution 45/199 of 21 December 1990,

Aware that the slow progress in the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies as related to development necessitates urgent action to be taken by all parties concerned,

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1/ On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77.

2/ On behalf of the African States that are members of the Commission.

Bearning in mind that the debt burden of many developing countries is a matter of concern and that the impact of structural adjustment policies on women in relation both to their participation in economic development and to the support of their families is often negative,

Expressing deep concern that, despite the fact that poor rural women contribute to all aspects of the well-being of rural families and account for more than half of the food production of developing countries, they are often the most vulnerable and disadvantaged group in society,

Aware that women's inadequate access to basic education, health, child-care facilities and other social services continues to undermine efforts to fully integrate women into the development process,

1. Urges Governments to adopt policies to promote economic development that will ensure the full and explicit integration of women's concerns;

2. Calls upon Governments, international financial and other relevant institutions, and non-governmental organizations to promote measures to stimulate the economies of developing countries and to provide financial services on the basis of equal opportunity for women and men, while avoiding adverse effects on their well-being, particularly that of vulnerable groups;

3. Appeals to Governments, donor countries, international agencies and appropriate financial institutions to make greater efforts to support the establishment of cooperative rural banks and other development-related institutions to assist women, particularly those engaged in small- and medium-scale productive activities.

4. Requests Member States to make provision for specific training programmes for women in rural and urban areas aimed at developing their technical and management skills and to give financial support, fellowships or both for training women, particularly those from developing countries, in science, technology, agriculture and management;

5. Calls upon Governments, donor countries and the relevant international agencies to take further coordinated measures to facilitate the access of women, particularly rural and urban poor women, to basic education, health and child-care facilities;

6. Requests all relevant specialized agencies of the United Nations system to strengthen their commendable efforts to support the economic advancement of rural women;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the present resolution in his biennial monitoring report on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Thirty-fifth session
Vienna, 27 February - 8 March 1991
Agenda item 5 (c)

PRIORITY THEMES:

PEACE: REFUGEE AND DISPLACED WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Australia,* Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, Finland,* France, Germany,* Guatemala, New Zealand,* Norway,* Philippines, Poland, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland,* Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America and Zambia:* draft resolution

Refugee and displaced women and children

The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

"The Economic and Social Council,

"Recalling that the majority of refugees and displaced persons are women and children and that a significant number of families are headed by women,

"Expressing its deep concern about the widespread violations of the rights of refugee and displaced women and children and their specific needs regarding protection and assistance,

"Underlining the potential of refugee and displaced women and the importance of ensuring their full participation when analysing their needs and designing and implementing programmes,

"Stressing that all action taken on behalf of refugee and displaced women and children must be guided by the relevant international instruments relating to the status of refugees as well as other human rights instruments, in particular, for States parties thereto, the United Nations Convention and its Protocol relating to the status of refugees, the Convention on the

* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex, of 18 December 1979) and the Convention on the rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex, of 20 November 1989),

"Recalling resolution 34/2 of the Commission on the Status of Women,

"Recognizing that ensuring equal treatment of refugee and displaced women and men may require specific action in favour of the former,

"Emphasizing the special relevance of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (E.85.IV.10) and the obligation of the United Nations system to give effect to its provisions,

"Taking note of the substantial number of refugees and displaced persons and their impact on the development prospects of the already fragile infrastructure of some receiving countries.

"Noting the important role of the main international organizations concerned: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, United Nations Border Relief Operation, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, World Food Programme, World Health Organization and the International Committee of the Red Cross,

"Recognizing the important role played by non-governmental organizations,

"Recalling the request by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/78 of 27 July 1990 for a system-wide review to assess the experience and capacity of various organizations in the coordination of assistance to all refugees, displaced persons and returnees,

"Commending the policy on refugee women recently adopted by the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/140 of 14 December 1990,

"Commending the Guidelines on Refugee Children adopted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

"Noting the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/1991/4) and the report of the Expert Group on Refugee and Displaced Women and Children (EGM/RDWC/1990/1), held at Vienna from 2 to 6 July 1990,

"1. Calls on Member States, in cooperation with United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations, to address urgently the root causes of refugee movements and displacement;

"2. Calls on the international community to give priority to extending international protection to refugee women and children by the implementation of measures to ensure greater protection

from physical violence, sexual abuse, abduction and circumstances that can force them into illegal activities;

"3. Urges Member States, United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations to ensure that the specific needs and resources of refugee and displaced women and children are fully considered in the planning of their activities and programmes;

"4. Also urges Member States, United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations to ensure that refugee and displaced women are provided with sufficient information to enable them to make decisions on their own future;

"5. Encourages Member States and the relevant organizations to provide non-discriminatory access individual identification and registration documents to all refugee women and, wherever possible, children, irrespective of whether the women and children are accompanied by male family members;
"6. Urges Member States and concerned organization to ensure the full participation of refugee and displaced women in the process of assessing their own needs, and in the planning and implementing of programmes;

"7. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the system-wide review to assess the experience and capacity of various organizations in the coordination of assistance to all refugees, displaced persons and returnees in particular assesses the ability of those organizations to address the situation of refugee women and children;

"8. Encourages international organizations to increase their capacity to respond to the needs of refugee and displaced women and children by greater coordination of their efforts;

"9. Commends those Member States that, despite severe economic and development problems of their own, continue to admit large numbers of refugees into their territory, and emphasizes the importance of the international community sharing these burdens;

"10. Requests all United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations, Governments, non-governmental organizations and funding agencies that play a role in the assistance and protection of refugees and displaced persons that had not already done so to adopt a policy on refugee and displaced women as well as children that will provide for the full integration of women and children into their programmes, within their respective mandates, and will include a time-frame and procedures for implementation;

"11. Urges the recruitment of staff, particularly female field staff, who are able to provide assistance and protection appropriate to the specific needs of refugee women and children;

"12. Calls on organizations working with refugees to ensure that key staff members undergo training to raise their awareness of the issues specific to refugee and displaced women and to provide them with skills for planning appropriate protection and assistance activities;

"13. Urges that in the collection of refugee statistics, data disaggregated by age and gender should be included in order to accurately represent the refugee population."